

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on line 6 of page 34 with the following paragraph:

--Figure 6a shows a view of the cross section of a second preferred embodiment of the vertical load support means 30, here indicated as the vertical support means 300. In this design, a preferably extruded tubular element of elastomeric material 360 as shown in Figure 6b and similar to those described for the elastomeric tubular elements in Figure 4, with similar arch shape elements 338 and 339, are used to construct the vertical support element 300. The vertical support element 300 consists of a preferably cylindrical housing 340 with the side wall 341, a top 336, and a bottom plate 332. The top plate 336 is attached to one of the base or payload and the bottom plate 332 is attached to the other of the base or payload. A shaft 331 is attached rigidly to the center of the bottom plate 332 and rides in the bushing 333 to provide for free travel of the bottom plate 332 in the direction parallel to the long axis of the cylinder 341. Other means, such as sliding guides, linear ball bushings or mechanical linkages may also be used to constrain the bottom plate 332 to motions parallel to the long axis of the cylinder 341. The tubular elastomeric element is placed within the internal cavity of the vertical support element 300 by winding it like a rope in a helical manner to fill out the entire cavity. During the assembly, the contacting side surfaces 342 and the contacting top and bottom surfaces 343 and 344 of the tubular elastomeric element are preferably bonded by an appropriate adhesive material. The resulting vertical support means 300 would resist the compressive force 350 in a manner similar to that described for the vertical support means 30 and similarly exhibit a nonlinear load-deflection characteristic, which can be varied by varying the geometry of the tubular elastomeric element 360.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning n line 22 of page 44 with the following paragraph:

--A mechanism to effect this adjustment of quasi-static load bearing capability, by changing the effective footprint area within which the load 31 bears upon load support 30, is illustrated in Figure 11 in which 140 is a sliding cam (alternatively referred to as a ramp) which is pulled by adjustment coupling 52 under a structure which includes load support means 30. The sliding cam 140 slides upon a surface of or affixed to base structure 102, and the payload 101 is above and rests on the support means 30. As the cam 140 undergoes motion 141 to the right, it lifts an increasing area of support means 30 into the load bearing position, where it is then held by well known latching means so that, for example, a portion 142 of support means 30 is in load bearing position where sliding cam has 140 has passed and lifted it, but another portion 143 ahead of the cam 140 is slack and uncompressed and makes no contribution to the support of the load 31 because it has not yet been lifted into position by the cam 140. In this manner, the compressive pressure exerted by the payload in the form of force 31 on the mat-form of support means 30 remains nominally constant.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

a2
a3

5. (Amended) The payload isolation system of claim 4, wherein the at least one parallelogram linkage comprises two or more parallelogram linkages wherein at least two of the two or more parallelogram linkages are configured non-parallel to each other.